

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SP-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6978
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MONTEVIDEO 2595

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SHUM, UY
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS VISIT OF SPANISH SOCIALIST PARLIAMENTARIANS

REF: MADRID 8961

1. JULY 16-18, THREE PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE SPANISH SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY -- PSOE (LUIS YANEZ BARRUERO, RAFAEL ESCUDA AND GUILLERMO GALEOTO), ACCOMPANIED BY MONICA THREFFAL, THE WIFE OF ANOTHER PROMINENT SPANISH SOCIALIST, VISITED MONTEVIDEO AS PART OF A HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATORY TOUR THROUGH THE SOUTHERN CONE. THE GROUP SOUGHT, AS ITS MAJOR OBJECTIVE, MEETINGS WITH HIGH GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH OFFICIALS AND WITH PROSCRIBED POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS.

2. THEY SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO MEET WITH ARMY CINC ALVAREZ, COUNCIL OF STATE PRESIDENT (AND GOU VICE PRESIDENT) HAMLET REYES, MINISTER OF JUSTICE BAYARDO BENGUA, AND ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCH-BISHOP PARTELLI. REFLECTING CUSTOMARY GOU RELUCTANCE TO MEET WITH SUCH VISITORS AND, AT LEAST IN PART, INTERNAL POLITICAL TENSIONS AT THAT MOMENT, ALVAREZ AND BAYARDO DID NOT GRANT THE GROUP AN AUDIENCE (ALTHOUGH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY ATTEMPTED TO FACILITATE
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THE VISIT AND STRONGLY URGED THE MINJUSTICE TO MEET WITH THEM).

3. PURSUANT TO THE VISITORS' REQUEST TO MEET WITH PARTY LEADERS, THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR ARRANGED WHAT THAT EMBASSY CONSIDERS A LARGELY UNPRODUCTIVE LUNCHEON WITH THREE REPRESENTATIVES FROM EACH OF URUGUAY'S TRADITIONAL PARTIES

(BLANCOS AND COLORADOS), PLUS PROMINENT AND MODERATE GOU COUNCIL OF STATE REPRESENTATIVES HAMLET REYES, GARCIA CAPURRO, AND VEGH VILLEGAS.

4. ACCORDING TO SPANISH EMBASSY SOURCES, THE VISITORS' URUGUAYAN EXPERIENCE COMPARED POORLY WITH THEIR RECEPTION IN OTHER SOUTHERN CONE COUNTRIES, WHERE THEY WERE PERMITTED ACCESS TO HIGHER RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. UPON RETURNING TO MADRID THE GROUP REPORTEDLY STATED THAT THE URUGUAYAN SOCIETY IS "MORE CLOSED THAN THOSE OF EITHER CHILE OR ARGENTINA".

5. COMMENT: THE VISIT WAS HAMPERED BY BAD PLANNING FROM BEGINNING TO END. IT BEGAN ON A SUNDAY BEFORE A TUESDAY NATIONAL HOLIDAY, LEAVING ONLY MONDAY FOR PRODUCTIVE WORK. THE SPANISH EMBASSY ALSO CLAIMS IT HAD LITTLE TIME TO PREPARE. IN ANY CASE, INITIAL SPADWORK WAS CLEARLY LACKING, AND THERE WAS NO PRE-ARRANGED ENTREE INTO HIGH GOU CIRCLES DURING A TIME OF MAJOR SHAKE-UPS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES. THE NEGATIVES HAVE CONTINUED AFTER THE VISITORS' DEPARTURE AS WELL, WITH GOU HARD-LINERS REPORTEDLY OUTRAGED THAT HIGH-RANKING GOU OFFICIALS HAD ATTENDED A LUNCHEON WITH PROSCRIBED NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS PRESENT.

6. INFORMATION REQUESTED REFTEL REGARDING EMBASSY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MONTEVIDEO'S HUMAN RIGHTS EFFORT AND ITS PRISONER FOCUS, AS WELL AS ANY INFORMATION DEVELOPED ON ALVAREZ DEL MONTE CASE, WILL BE FORWARDED BY SEPTELS.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
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